

Barriers to Using Disability Services

Disability Services is here to assist you by facilitating your accommodations in and outside of the classroom. Many college students who have used disability services in the past, or who are newly diagnosed, wrestle with timely requests and usage of accommodations. This struggle creates barriers that obstruct students' educational progress. Barriers, such as the ones mentioned below, hinder students from being as successful as possible. Do you recognize any of these barriers in yourself?

Fresh Start Barrier:

"My disability is all behind me. I don't have to deal with it anymore. No one needs to know about it."

- Denies disability
- Does not seek help.

I'm No Different Barrier:

"I can compete on the same terms. I can take just as many units and engage in just as much extra-curricular activity as any other student."

- Takes too many units.
- Spends too much time participating in social functions.
- Is employed too many hours per week.

Bail Out Barrier:

"There's just too much to do. I can't do it. I've got to get out."

- Drops into a cycle of learned helplessness.
- Stops doing academic work.
- Stops going to classes, but does not officially withdraw from them.
- Narrow sighted with regard to solutions and overlooks possibilities for receiving necessary help.

Bail Me Out Barrier:

"I really got myself into trouble. I need you to get me out."

- Requests that Students with Disabilities Services contacts professors and gets them out of their situation.
- Usually waits until the last few weeks of the semester.

Everything Is O.K. Barrier:

"I'm doing fine in all my classes. I'm not having any problems at all."

- Reports are inaccurate.
- Does not want to admit that he/she is having difficulty.

Change My Grade Barrier:

"I'm not worried; I can get the instructor to change my grade."

- Has developed strategies for convincing professors that they deserve a better grade.

They Don't Understand Barrier:

"It's not my fault. The professor just doesn't understand."

- Blames instructor for difficulties in class.
- Does not accept responsibility.

I Can't Do It Myself Barrier:

"I can't do it. Can you or someone else do it for me?"

- Overly dependent on others.
- Attempts to get others to do the work for them.

It is important to note that there is no perfect student, each student goes through the educational process in their own manner. Your courses are a place for you to grow mentally, learn more about yourself, and take agency over your educational experience. Don't let barriers stop you from getting the access to education you need to thrive.

Disability Services is here for you. Newly admitted and current students can fill out the Disability Services application and upload your verification forms using the Owl Care portal on your student dashboard otiscollege.studenthealthportal.com. After completing these initial steps, contact D. Carol D. Branch at cbranch@otis.edu or 310-846-2554 to set up a zoom meeting. You can also contact Dr. Carol Branch before filling out the forms with any questions you may have.